

WAYNE, PA—Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) addressed the crowd of students at Service Academy Day held at the Valley Forge Military Academy & College in Wayne, Pa., on Sunday, April 19, 2009. Each of the service academies has vacancies every year to be filled by qualified applicants from the 7th Congressional District. The academies, in connection with Members of Congress, have developed this day to help pass along information regarding the admissions process. This day helps introduce those students, especially those who meet the stringent criteria to be considered for nomination, to the process of obtaining a Congressional Nomination. Each of the service academies had representatives present to answer questions, address concerns, and provide general information about the unique nomination process.

“I commend each young man and woman present today,” said Congressman Sestak. “Your desire to seek a position of leadership in our armed forces during time of war reflects a unique set of personal values and some exceptional parenting. As you begin the deliberately challenging process of applying for admission to a service academy, remember that now, more than ever, our nation is in need of the highest sense of authenticity and accountability in its military, business, governmental and scientific leadership corps. Your generation faces extraordinary challenges. Those challenges are solvable only if those fortunate enough to be placed in a position of leadership understand that they are consistently and continuously accountable for their actions and those above and below them in their chain of command. I wish you all success in this process. I know that everyone may not be selected to attend the service academy of their choice. However, no matter the results of this selection process, if you commit yourself to service of some kind to your community and your nation, yours will be a life of great satisfaction and purpose.”

Renowned as the world’s premier leader development institution, The U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY, accomplishes its mission by developing cadets intellectually, physically, militarily, ethically, spiritually, and socially. The student body, or Corps of Cadets, numbers 4,400 and each year approximately 1,000 cadets join the Long Gray Line as they graduate and are commissioned as a 2nd Lt in the U.S. Army.

The U.S. Naval Academy was founded in 1845 by the Secretary of the Navy, George Bancroft, in historic Annapolis, MD. The history of the Academy has often reflected the history of the United States itself. As the U.S. Navy has moved from a fleet of sail and steam-powered ships to a high tech fleet of nuclear-powered submarines and surface ships as well as supersonic aircraft, the Academy has changed also. The Naval Academy gives young men and women the up-to-date academic and professional training needed to be effective naval and marine officers in their assignments after graduation.

Designed for the future, The United States Air Force Academy boasts state-of-the-art facilities, including laboratories, observatories, and a library containing over 700,000 volumes. Landmarks include the Cadet Chapel with its seventeen spires that soar 150 feet toward the Colorado sky. Spanning 18,000 spectacular acres nestled against the Rocky Mountains, the Academy draws thousands of visitors from around the world each year. The Air Force Academy Mission is to educate, train and inspire men and women to become officers of character, motivated to lead the United States Air Force in service to our nation.

The Coast Guard Academy in New London, CT, is proud of its role in developing leaders of character for the Coast Guard, a military, maritime, and multi-mission organization. It is the smallest of the five armed forces academies, and many refer to the Coast Guard Academy as the best kept secret in higher education. As the smallest and perhaps most distinctive of the service academies, its mission is to graduate leaders of character who will serve as commissioned officers in the Coast Guard, and the Academy has excelled at that mission for over 130 years. The talent of its officer corps is highly regarded by the citizens of this nation, and considered by many to be the best in government. Every day at the academy is devoted to developing future leaders.

The most important element in a productive merchant fleet and a strong transportation industry is people—men and women who are intelligent, dedicated, well-educated and competent. The purpose of The U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in King's Point, NY, is to ensure that such people are available to the nation as shipboard officers and as leaders in the transportation field who will meet the challenges of the present and the future. The Academy teaches students how to succeed in the maritime and transportation industries or the Armed Forces, while it prepares them to receive a bachelor of science degree, a merchant marine license, and an appointment as a commissioned officer on reserve or active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.*

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